Orientalism and Arab/Muslim Characters in Greene's *The Heart of The Matter*: a Narrative, Stylistic Study in Terms of Rimmom-Kenan's Model

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Abstract:
Arabs and Muslims have intermittently appeared in Western Writings whether fictional or factual. The representations are almost always stereotypical of the orientalist tradition with its propensity to subordinate and belittle. Ideologically speaking, the derogation of the other races was a celebrated tradition and perhaps still is. This study tries to examine Arab and Muslim characters that appear in Graham Greene's ***The Heart of the Matter*** against the backdrop of orientalist ideology. Rimmon-Kenan's model of characterization is adopted to analyze and interpret the textual clues regarding two Muslims in the novel, namely, *Ali* and *Yusef* in an attempt to capture and identify the racial and ideological parameters operating.

Introduction
That the Arabs and the religion they converted to have been always one way or the other misrepresented in western literature is a fact beyond dispute. But there is hardly a nation without national illusions or prejudices of one or the other kind. Eastern people have not been very kind with the Western persona, which is also twisted and tampered with according to the changing political milieu. The Arabs as nation have their own illusions about their superiority and supremacy. Nations move from prime to decline and their illusions are dispelled as they become too burdensome. Nevertheless, as long as political prosperity lasts, narrow-mindedness is kept nourished.

Literature is not a mere reflection of contemporary reality it is rather the magnification of that reality. Through the magnifying and

modifying glasses of literature, details jut out no matter how minute or trivial. To assume that Islam and Arabs were of any interest to the European masses is rather a wild guess. Arabs and Islam have mattered urgently but to politicians and clerics/ Papacy as much as crusades meant more to Caliphs and the military than the common folk. That is why, Edward Said (1978) insisted on discussing Orientalism and the western misconceptions of Arabs and Muslims from a political perspective flexible enough to admit other disciplines but still triggered by the ongoing political struggle for power and dominance/suzerainty. History proves that the west and east have always engaged in a cat-dog fight: Roman and Sassanid, then Roman and Arabs, etc. When war fails, they tend to rub each other noses in the mud lashing verbal attacks, which are slow in effect but conquer time to last eternally.

As people of knowledge, the Europeans were and are well-versed and fully aware of the fact that the Arab land was the centre of enlightenment not only in relation to the ancient civilizations Egyptians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Assyrians, etc, but also with respect to what is termed as the biblical lands. At the same time, this thorough study of history informed them that the Orient always needed to be dominated as its successive peoples had no sense of self-government and they were always at war among themselves or with outside powers. This last observation helped them occupy the East and rule it under the banner of Oriental renaissance. Orientalism then is associated with colonialism and imperialism.

Greene's ***The Heart of the Matter*** is typical of a colonial narrative where the English tried to impose their power and control on Africa and its peoples. The struggle for dominance and hegemony creates an environment of tension, distrust, and hostility that constantly generates more negative outcomes. The non-English inhabitants of the colony are packaged up together as untrustworthy, treacherous and dangerous. The study applies Rimmon-Kenan characterization model to provide evidence of the Western prejudiced and stereotypic portrayal of African and/or Arab Muslims.

Characters in Narrative Theory

Chatman (1978) starts his discussion of character by quoting Aristotle who defined it as 'that element in accordance to which we say that agents are of certain type' where element is, Chatman illustrates, 'a composite of personality features, or traits… for instance , the young, the old, the wealthy, the man of power.' Next to traits, Aristotle listed three more dimensions of characterization which are action, likeness, and consistency.

Formalists (Propp and Tomashevsky) and some structuralists (Bremond and even Todorov), assume that characters are 'products of plots' and therefore 'their status is functional' and they are 'participants or actants rather than personages' (in Chatman, 1978: 111). Thus, characters are subordinated to action and only subsidiary to and 'a derivative product of the plot.' This attitude partly coincides with Todorov's distinction of apsychological narratives. Whether action is promoted or demoted in relation to character, it still exposes characters fully and truthfully. This view seems to fit very acutely the fairy tale narrative formula and thus discard very essential aspects of more modern narrative structures where characters are qualitatively different (Chatman, 1978: 111).

Other structuralists, basically, Barthes and to some extent Todorov proposed ' a more open, afunctional notion of character' which can account for more sophisticated characters. As hinted at above, Todorov distinguishes two narrative types. In the first (psychological narratives), character predominates; in the second (apsychological narratives), action does and character is subordinated (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 38). 'For psychological narratives,' (Chatmen (1978: 114) illuminates, ' actions are "expression" or even "symptoms' of personality, hence "transitive", while they exist in their own right, as independent sources of pleasure, hence "intransitive"' for apsychological narratives. In the apsychological narratives, Todorov explains that causality dominates; once a character trait is mentioned (greed for instance), its consequence ' must immediately follow' (search for money).

Roland Barthes has made even a further shift from the purely functional view of characters. Chatman (1978: 115) points to the importance of Barthes' radical views of character where it is no longer 'subservient to action.' Barthes affirms that characters ' are narrative

properties revealed by their own "code" – the so-called "semic" code. However, in his arguments, Barthes resorts to the same terminology mainly *trait* and *personality* used by the advocates of the psychological view of narratives. A character, for Barthes, is a product of the more or less complex/ congruent/ contradictory combination of traits. Accordingly, 'this complexity determines character's "personality" (Chatman, 1978: 116).

Though readers of fiction are not supposed to argue about characters as living people, Chatman (1978: 117-9) explains, yet characters are not merely words. Despite their purely verbal existence, characters are far more intricate and readers tend to go 'beyond the words of Shakespeare' to construct Hamlet, for instance. Thus, sophisticated characters tend 'to remain open constructs', which justifies the need to treat characters as 'autonomous beings, not as mere plot functions.' In his discussion of what and how a character is reconstructed, Chatman is, just like Barthes, unable to discard the formalists terminology specifically 'trait' which is a personal quality or 'a narrative adjective tied to the narrative copula when that replaces the normal transitive predicate' (Chatman, 1978: 125). However, 'the actual verbal adjective' need not appear especially in modernist narrative; it has to be inferred as 'it is immanent to the deep structure of the text.' In a similar vein, Garvey (in Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 39) suggests that a character may be constructed from 'attributive propositions' where an attributive proposition 'consists of a character's name (or its equivalent), a predicate (e.g. 'insane') and a 'modalizer', indicating degrees and qualifications (e.g. 'questionable', 'to some extent').'

In Conclusion, Chatman (1978: 126) argues that a character is 'a paradigm of traits' where the trait is a 'relatively stable or abiding personal quality' which may 'unfold' or 'emerge earlier or later in the course of the story,' but is prone to 'disappear or be replaced by another.' There is a 'whole set of character's traits… available to the audience,' and readers are called upon to 'sort through the paradigm to find out which trait would account for a certain action.' If they fail at the task, they can 'add another trait to the list' (Chatman, 1978:127).

Characterization and Stereotypes

Card (1988: 7) argues that humans are categorized according to certain stereotypes. Such stereotypes include: *Racial or Physical type* (black, white, redhead, curly hair), and *Ethnic and Regional* traits (Italians, Indians, Arabs, etc). The repertoire of ethnic characteristics, Florack (2010: 481) points out, is oriented by 'the highly criticized inequality – often called Eurocentrism – in the representation of nearer and more distant peoples.' As an illustrative example, Florack (2010: 479) cites Scaliger's instruction to authors about ' the Asians' propensity for luxury, the disloyalty of Africans, the acumen of the Europeans.' Likewise, La Mesnardière gives a list of attributes according to which characters are modeled. The bases of categorization are ethnic stereotypes. Thus, people are characterized as French, Spaniards, Italians, English, Greeks, Egyptians and also Thracians, Moors and Scythians and Germans, to mention few. Each ethnicity is associated with certain attributes, the Germans, for instance 'are likely to be rough, faithful, modest, avid eaters, affable, valiant and freedom-loving.' When a character formation deviates from the norm or the pattern, then the deviation is dictated by the plot and/or the themes. Even then, this licensed deviation has limits, hence an Asian should never be made into a warrior and an African should not be portrayed as loyal (in Florack, 2010: 481).

In a fictional work, the stereotypes can be operating keys in justifying actions, behaviours, dispositions, potential and in the long run destiny. The stereotypical categories, nevertheless, trigger prejudices and biases and they do not necessarily identify who that person is. Muslims and Orientals are similarly stereotyped in a manner that dehumanizes and demonizes them so that they fit perfectly into the already conceived idea of the evil Arab or Muslim persona. Macfie inspects at least thirty novels in which Arab characters appeared and which :

> were based on personal experience, these works remained for the most part remote from reality, betraying an inclination to stereotype the orientals concerned, either as fine men, full of spirit and imagination, 'galant, gentil, poli, bien élévé', or as wastrels, lazy, dishonest, pompous, quarrelsome, superstitious, sexually corrupt and fatalistic. (2002: 35-6)

The positive stereotypes are the monopoly of these fiction writers- probably the Arabian Nights zealots- whose conception of the Orient was shrouded with romance and mysticism. Apart from fiction, Macfie (2002:131) illuminates that no matter how the Arab society changes, Arabs are still stereotyped as ' obscurantist, escapist, fatalistic and passive.' Said (2003: 27) points to the strong existence and presence of ' the web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanizing ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim.' Accordingly, the Arabs are associated with ' stereotypes of Islamic and Arabic sensuality, sloth, fatalism, cruelty, degradation and splendor' (Said, 2003: 345). Likewise, 'media have been awash with demeaning stereotypes that lump together Islam and terrorism, or Arabs and violence, or the Orient and tyranny' (Said, 2003: 347). Generally, a Muslim and/or an Arab is often associated with rebellion, disorder, lawlessness, backwardness, retrogression and trouble-making. Arab Muslims are thus untrustworthy and a source of agitation and turbulence and so their chastisement and abuse at the hands of Europeans are well deserved. This negative, distorted image and the evil actions germane to it persisted in literature for ages. Though, this view is a little mitigated nowadays, it is not altogether discarded.

Characterization and Rimmon-Kenan's Model

Rimmon-Kenan provides a structuralist model to account for the process of characterization by which a character is constructed. The construction comprises 'various indications dispersed throughout the text' which the reader picks and puts together like a jig-saw puzzle, i.e., reconstructs (1983: 380). This reconstruction is what Barthes describes as 'process of nomination' which he equates 'with the act of reading.' Textual indicators, then, are sought to construct the character, viz, characterization. Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 61) refers to two types of such indicators proposed by Ewen: direct definition and indirect presentation. The first directly names a trait by a adjective ' generous' or abstract noun ' generosity' or a part of speech, 'she helps the poor.' Such kind , Herman and Vervaeck (2001: 67) comment, abounds in many traditional novels and is marked by its evaluative, or even subjective thrust. In the second type, the trait is not mentioned but has to be inferred and it is 'based on metonymy for instance a

character's speaks in an accent that betrays social position, education, and environment (Herman and Vervaeck, 2001: 67). There are many strategies according to which indirect characterization can be achieved and which Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 63-70) lists in detail. These strategies can be briefly sketched as:

Action

A character's trait may be implied by 'one-time (or non-routine) actions' and/or by habitual ones that are iterative though not necessarily mentioned repeatedly in the text. One-time actions do not reflect '*constant* qualities', they are apt to ' evoke the dynamic aspect of the character, often playing a part in a turning point in the narrative.' Alternatively, habitual actions ' reveal the character's unchanging or static aspect, often having a comic or ironic effect, as when a character clings to old habits in a situation which renders them inadequate' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 63). Comparatively, an action may have 'a dramatic impact' that 'often suggests that the traits it reveals are qualitatively more crucial than' many of a character's routines. Both one-time and habitual actions can fall into the following categories:

a. **Act of commission** (i.e. something performed by the character).
b. **Act of omission** (something which the character should, but does not do).
c. **Contemplated act** (an unrealized plan or intention of the character).

It is equally important for character inferences to depend on whether the character does an action or an action happens to that character. It is a basic distinction between action and event which in its turn sheds the light on whether the character is an active or passive participant. In the former, the character initiates and performs (agent), whereas in the latter it experiences and undergoes (patient).

Speech

A variety of traits can be inferred from what a character says when engaged in conversation or even through 'the silent activity of the mind.' Speech is usually indicative of traits through both its content and form (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 65). The style of speech or its form

is equally crucial as 'a common means of characterization where the characters' language is individuated and distinguished from that of the narrator. Style may be indicative of origin, dwelling place, social class, or profession' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 66). Besides the social aspect of a character which its speech reveals, style can reveal many 'individual characteristics', for instance subordinate clauses tend to abound in intellectual characters that try to 'follow all the nuances of thought or feeling.' Chatman (1978: 124) quotes Ludwig Klages' insightful comment on the role of language in penetrating human soul affirming that 'the most talented thinker,…, should do nothing but examine the words and phrases', a process would reveal to that thinker 'perhaps a thousand times more than has ever been discovered by observation, apparatus, and experiment upon man.'

Both action and speech, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 67) explains, rely on the cause-effect relation to communicate character-traits. For instance, X kills, then X is brave; X uses many words when s/he speaks, X is snobbish. Both types also are temporal as they are located in time and thus they comment on the character at a specific point of time.

External appearance

Physical appearances have always been a rich source of character-traits. Lavator's findings regarding the relation ship between facial expressions and personality traits had a huge impact on many novelists such as Balzac and other ninetieth-century novelists. Though Lavator's theory has been discredited, still external appearances remain a powerful source in the hands of many novelists. A distinction must be made between external features that are ' are grasped as beyond the character's control, such as height, colour of eyes, length of nose' and those that depend partly on the character like hair style and clothes. While the first set 'characterizes through contiguity alone, the second has additional causal overtones' (Ewen in Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; 67). In other words, the first group indicates biological, or even racial characteristics according to which humans are judged weighed , evaluated and disparaged. The second group marks personal choices and tastes. The two sets in unison could delineate living circumstances (for instance hardships or luxury).

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:680 points to two issues concerning physical descriptions. Though external description often 'speaks of itself', it at times functions as a disguised definition 'rather than as an indirect characterization.' This is what Ewen terms as 'seeming descriptions' that occur 'when a non-visual quality is attributed – as in a synecdoche – to one part of the character's physique rather than to the character as a whole (e.g. 'her intelligent eyes' instead of 'she is intelligent'). Kress (1998: 18) affirms the importance of successful descriptive detail which help ' create strong visual images.'

Environment

The character may be described in a narrative against the backdrop of its 'physical surrounding(room, house, street, town) as well as his human environment (family, social class),' two environmental facets rich in ' trait-connoting metonymies' (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 68). The environmental indicators characterize through the relation of contiguity which 'is frequently supplemented by that of causality.' For instance, a shabby house indicates poverty. Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 69) points to the influence of pseudo-scientific findings on which novelists like Balzac and Zola relied to embody their naturalistic orientations: 'The doctrine of race, moment and milieu,…, had a decisive influence on the use of environment in the writing of Balzac and Zola.'

Analogy

Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 69) prefers to deal with analogy not as a separate type of character-indicator but as a reinforcement of characterization because its capacity to do so is bound to 'a prior establishment, by other means, of the traits on which it is based. A grey and dreary landscape, for example, is not likely to imply in itself a character's pessimism, but it may enhance the reader's perception of this trait once it has been revealed through the character's action, speech or external appearance.' Besides, there could be always some overlap between analogous (metaphoric) elements and 'such forms of metonymic presentation as external appearance and environment.' Rimmon-Kenan argues further in relation to absence of contiguity and causality from analogy which 'is a purely textual link, independent of the story-causality.'

Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 70-72) lists three areas where analogy reinforces characterization though they are by no means exhaustive:

a. **Analogous names** which can parallel character-traits in four ways:

(1) Visual, as when the letter O is associated with a round and fat character and the letter I with a tall thin one (his example).

(2) Acoustic, whether in onomatopoeia, like the buzz of flies in the name ‘Beelzebub’, or in less strictly onomatopoeic forms when the character's name draws ridicule or mockery.

(3)Articulatory, like Dickens’s ‘Grad-grind’ in Hard Times (1854), suggesting the main quality of the character by the mouthing of the name and the muscle activity it requires.

(4) Morphological, like the presence of ‘boeuf’ (bull) in ‘Bov/ ary’.

A fifth category may be added to subsume allegorical names and mythical allusions. In allegories, names suggest main character-traits: pride, Gluttony, etc. Modern texts which are essentially non-allegorical employ the 'semantic parallelism between name and trait' for thematic ends. As to mythical illusions, if a character is given a mythical name, that character is likely to have a similar fate to that of its namesake. Further, Kress (1998: 23) insists that characters' surnames are chosen to reflect the ' fictional world’s ethnic diversity (or lack of it) while first names inform on the ' character’s family’s worldview, hopes and/or generation.

b. **Analogous Landscape** which runs parallel to the physical or social environment. Landscape is not man made and hence bears very little to the relation of the story- causality with characters. Nevertheless, the character's choice to live or go to 'a certain natural location may suggest a cause-and-effect relation.' The analogy is either straight in that it is based on similarity between character's mood/situation and the landscape. Or else, it may be inverse in its emphasis of contrast.

c. **Analogy between characters** where two characters are portrayed in or against similar circumstances. That they react similarly or differently to the same situation emphasizes character-traits. Such analogy contrasts good and evil, happiness and misery, knowledge and ignorance and the like.

The above strategies of indirect characterization more or less converge with Card's delineation of the four factors operating in character's construction, which are *milieu, idea, character,* and *event*. The Milieu is defined as 'the world surrounding the characters—the landscape, the interior spaces, the surrounding cultures the characters emerge from and react to; everything from weather to traffic laws.' As for the idea, it ' is the information that the reader is meant to discover or learn during the process of the story.' Character is identified as 'the nature of one or more of the people in the story— what they do and why they do it. It usually leads to or arises from a conclusion about human nature in general.' Finally, the events are 'everything that happens' in the story 'and why.' It is worthy mentioning that these factors do not operate apart from each other, but overlap (Card, 1988: 48).

Arab and Muslim Characters in *The Heart of the Matter*

Located in a West African colony, the story of Greene's masterpiece ***The Heart of The Matter*** involves characters of races and religions other than the English and Christianity. There are Arabs represented by the Syrians whether Muslim as with Yusef or Christian as Tallit who cross roads with the main character in the novel, namely, Major Henry Scobie. But at his house and very close to him, Scobie keeps an African Muslim Ali as his most trusted servant. In all, the narrative invests three characters; two of them are Muslims and two are Arabs.

It is noteworthy that these characters though at times are more influential in the course of the story than Europeans, still they appear less than any. Ramse-Kurtz (2003: 317) takes to task Greene's relegation of Ali and Yusef 'to the very background of the novel,' which 'has frequently earned him the charge of eurocentric prejudice.' Hence, Yusef, the villain of the novel, participates in terms of space far less than Wilson. Nevertheless, the presence, at least, of the so-far mentioned Yusef proves far more paramount and crucial to the progress of the plot than the prolific Wilson. Tallit has the approval of the Island cleric, but in general terms of characterization, he appears anemic and languid. There remains Ali's character to explore. Ali is the typical native servant of a white master who is ready to lay his life at the peck and call of the latter. He is left to clean the mess after his

master and wash dirty laundry and do compromising errands. In short, Ali epitomizes unquestionable loyalty and obedience not to mention complete submission to the will of the master.

Major Henry Scobie, on the other hand, is the typical Christian master whose kindness and compassion seem to earn him quite deservedly the allegiance of the native servant. When the narrative commences, the reader is told that Scobie has known Ali for 15 years, longer than Scobie knew any of his acquaintances including his wife, Louise. At the same time, readers become aware of the tension the Island lives in due to the vendetta-like conflict between Yusef and Tallit, the Syrian immigrants who settled in there and took over a very ludicrous business. The conflict between the two is superficially professional when two rivals fight to dominate the trade going on in a place as profitable and notorious as the Island especially in time of war. Apparently both are engaged in illegal business smuggling being on top. Both exchange accusations and claim to be set up and framed by the other. The narrative implies that their saga would have gone on infinitively whether there was an outside intervention or not. However, in the course of the story Yusef's culpability is proven and exposed to the reader while Tallit's remains a mystery. In short, it is one way or another insinuated that the evil in the Island is conducted single-handed by the Yusef, notorious tycoon whose criminal actions are known to every one, and on top Scobie.

The textual characterization of the two Muslims in the novel, Ali and Yusef; the latter is of Arab-Syrian roots, is explored by the application of Rimmon-Kenan's characterization model. These two narrative participants are rarely characterized directly. Indirect characterization emerges in abundance in the course of the story. Both the extradiegetic narrator and Scobie refrain from characterizing Ali and Yusef directly except very rarely. For instance upon his first introduction, Ali, referred to as the boy, is described as ' short and squat with the broad ugly pleasant face of a Temne' (P. 16); the statement with its rather contradictory ambience 'ugly pleasant face' occurs before the boy' name is mentioned to racially identify him as a native African or a Temne. His name, however, characterizes him as A Muslim. Scobie's evaluative commentary on Ali's characters is rather myopic and cursory and they remain superficial and elusory. One reason is that Scobie who is the focus of the narrative rarely

passes evaluative judgments. His judgment which is often distracted and baffled hardly qualifies him to the task. On the other hand, the extradegietic narrator adopts showing rather than telling techniques which marks omniscience:

-He had been 'small boy" first, then assistant steward in the days when one kept four servants, now he was plain steward. (P. 17)
-He thought: I know that Ali is honest . (P. 255)

Scobie's nominative references to Ali are scarce and not strictly adjectival. He seems to have taken Ali for granted and did not need to enumerate his various assets. On the other hand, Ali seems to expose no personal flaws for the master to complain about. In the first example, a flashback of the past merges with the immediate present to assess the position Ali holds in the house. In the second example, Scobie tries in vain to restore his trust in Ali's honesty in response to Yusef's skepticism. The immediate conjecture is that the narrator does not provide a direct or exhaustive characterization of Ali for thematic ends. When the narrative closes and Ali is liquidated, Scobie is not yet decisive about either Ali's loyalty or disloyalty.

As to Yusef, direct characterization is altogether absent. Neither the extradegietic narrator (outside the story), nor Scobie whose thought takes over narration now and then formulate any direct personal evaluations in terms of direct listing of Yusef's traits whether good or bad. The narrative obviously refrains from making clear-cut assessments of both Ali and Yusef to preserve the dubious and conspicuous nature of the messy affairs to happen later. Whether Ali is innocent or not remains a mystery to ponder on by readers. One may speculate that the Western reader either wavers between belief and disbelief or entertains an inkling of doubt regarding Ali's honesty. The Muslim reader is inclined to regard Ali as a victim of satanic plotting on the part of Yusef and paranoia and vulnerability on the part of Scobie. Ali's devotion to the western master served him ill in the end paying for it with his own death. The rejection of direct characterization which is not uncommon in modern sophisticated narratives, serves to keep the suspicious atmosphere unresolved even up to the end.

The narrator, alternatively, relies on indirect characterization inviting the readers to formulate their own stand points. The allegedly concrete information is laid before the readers to sort out and interpret and then to arrive at valid conclusions. To begin with action, Ali is often described doing odd and random domestic jobs around Major Scobie. His actions are essentially habitual in that some are iterative along the narrative and others are habitual by the virtue of their routine nature:

> -Ali came in, his pink soles flapping on the floorboards, carrying a bottle of water from the filter. "The back door humbug me," Scobie explained. He held his hand out over the wash-basin, while Ali poured the water over the wound. The boy made gentle chuckling sounds of commiseration: his hands were as gentle as a girl's. (37-8)
> -Ali came from the house carrying on his head a tin bath, a folding chair, and a bundle tied up in an old towel' (P. 78).
> -Once when he opened his eyes Ali was standing beside him waiting for him to awake. (P. 82)
> -The next time he woke Ali was still there, this time with a cup of tea and a plate of biscuits…. Ali squatting in the body of the van put an arm round his shoulder, holding a mug of hot tea somehow he had boiled another (P. 83)

Ali's actions impose an image of a loyal dedicated servant who has always taken care to straighten things for Scobie, therefore, acts of commission abound along the text. Ali is always portrayed as obediently performing servile actions as he is supposed to do. However at his very first mention in the novel, Ali is introduced as an object of Scobie's biased affection despite visible flaws:

> A fork fell on the floor and he watched Ali *surreptitiously* wipe it on his sleeve, watched him with affection…. After each leave Ali would be on the landing-stage waiting to organize his luggage with three or four ragged carriers. (P. 17)

It may be dubbed as one-time, non-routine action, and hence dynamic. The statement carries more than meet the eye. It insinuates that Ali is capable of surreptitious actions even if innocently done. It

thus prepares though rather lamely for the suspicions that Scobie would harbour against Ali later in the narrative. Wiping the dirty fork with his sleeves, the reader is apt to infer, Ali is typical of native ignorance, to say the least, which flouts or disregards the high ideals of European hygiene. Yet Scobie's reaction is warmth and affection incarnate. If Scobie's mentality at this point in the narrative is focalized, then Ali's action and Scobie's reaction expose their mutual dedication to each other. Nevertheless, Ali is professional when it comes to dressing wounds, a skill the narrator credits to Scobie himself who taught him to bandage according to European standards: ' Years ago he had taught Ali to bandage: now he could tie one as expertly as a doctor' (P. 38).

Ali's devotion to scobie makes him act at times – when Scobie caught a fever for instance– as the protector or defender of his master fending off danger whether literal or metaphorical chasing whoever could likely disturb the invalid and staying up late often in wait of Scobie's home return. Again the actions are merely habitual and acts of commission:

> - Ali squatted on the step just outside whittling a piece of wood. Occasionally he chased away villagers who raised their voices within the area of sickroom silence (P. 89)
>
> -It was nearly one in the morning before he returned: the light was out in the kitchen quarters and Ali was dozing on the step of the house until the head-lamps woke him, passing across his sleeping face. He jumped up and lit the way from the garage with his torch. (P. 105).
>
> -As usual Ali was waiting for him, dozing uneasily on the kitchen step. He lit Scobie to the door with his torch. (P. 215).

The habitual acts of commission are designed to blur the picture even further so that the reader would empathetically share Scobie's later bewilderment regarding his African Muslim servant. The reader would wonder as much as Scobie did whether Ali is honest and unjustly murdered. However, in a case or two Ali's actions acquire a dynamicity and non-routine aspect when they take Scobie aback. Though it is not implied that the island lived in peace and harmony before, Wilson's coming introduced a new phase of espionage where he planted spies everywhere he could including Scobie's surrounding.

As Scobie was entertaining doubts as to Ali being in the service of Wilson ,'the door burst open and there was Ali. He had a boy by the arm who whimpered' (P. 263). Yet, that one-time action could not win Scobie back to Ali's side.

Ali does not only look after his master's physical comforts, but also has a keen eye on his emotional and psychological welfare. Noticing how his master was broken by worries and attributing it though not wholly correctly to his wife's departure, Ali had tidied every thing up so that no sign of the departed wife was left and ' even removed the photograph[Louise's] and put it in a drawer' (P. 105). However, Scobie, at some hints dropped by Yusef and under the pressure laid on him by Wilson, snaps and begins to lose faith in Ali's fidelity. The normal reaction is to watch Ali more carefully than he used to do and read more into Ali's actions despite the absurdity of the situation. So Ali's concern is longer welcomed affectionately and his patronizing the master is looked at askance. The acts which used to be commission and habitual start to take on a murky and obscure nature. For instance when Scobie notices that: 'Ali stood by his car, talking to another boy who slipped quietly away when he saw Scobie approach' (P. 255), his impulsive inference is conspiracy against him especially as he identifies the boy to be Wilson's servant and Ali admits that he is his half brother.

To do Scobie some justice, one can not fail to observe that he revolted at first against the mere suspicion and tried then to restore his trust by reminding himself of all the times that Ali proved himself worthy of absolute trust, but still he ends up relapsing into doubt or at least oscillates between the two:

> He remembered Ali the night after Pemberton's death, cup of tea in hand, holding him up against the shaking lorry, and then he remembered Wilson's boy slinking off along the wall by the police station. (P. 263)

Ali does not seem to omit any action that contributes to his master's service and the text provides no evidence that he entertained any plans that could harm Scobie. All his acts of commission are performed down to the letter. If there were any clandestine affairs as Yusef suggested, the text passed over them

in silence. As for omissions, a few of them emerge as Scobie's suspicions take hold of him. Even then Ali had the right justification. For instance, Helen's letter was not placed on the table in the study as the custom goes because Yusef was in there and Ali protected his master's privacy. While Scobie's doubts take the best of him, Ali was on alert not to compromise his master by exposing his love affair to Yusef and hence kept the letter safely lodged with him:

> "Missus leave letter," he said, and took an envelope out of his shirt.
> "Why didn't you leave it on my table?"
> "Massa [Yusef] in there." (P. 215)

Ali's contemplated acts are not contemplated ironically by him but by others such as Scobie or Yusef for the narrator does not focalize Ali's consciousness. Scobie anticipates Ali to perform is nightly routine upon his master's home coming: ' Ali will come forward with his torch to light me to the door' (p 56). In contrast, to aggravate the situation and entrap further the paranoid Scobie, Yusef anticipates though wrongly Ali's treachery and ensuing escape deluding Scobie into hoping that: "Perhaps he[Ali] will be frightened. He will know you have found him out and he will run away. Sometimes boys go back to bush ..." (P. 275).

As for Yusef, his actions, even the seemingly innocent among them, are always dubious and clandestine and appear to drive beyond mere actions formulating backstage plans. His agenda targets Scobie's integrity. Though the text does not portray Yusef doing anything that is by itself dubious other than such action as ' Yusef hovered like a fat moth on the edge of the light' (P 210). Few actions are reported and are almost always trivial and unsubstantial:

> Yusef brought out with difficulty in a voice halfway to sleep. He shook his head, so that the white lick of hair flapped: then putting out a vague hand he stretched for the siphon. (P. 159)

These actions are rather habitual as they occur more than once along the narrative and typical of a person brought to consciousness abruptly. Ironically more than once, Scobie finds Yusef asleep either

in his broken car early in the narrative, or in Scobie's own house while waiting for his home coming or in Yusef's own boudoir-like bedroom as in the example cited above. Such actions are rather derogatory; they betray and expose Yusef's animal-like and wild nature. More of these actions are reported as Yusef keeps bumping into Scobie now and then. Yusef hunts stubbornly for and chases Scobie wherever he is offered a chance and especially after dark. He keeps lying in lurch of Scobie at every corner possible or hovering close to the latter's house. He keeps waiting patiently for some wind-fallen opportunity that would put the vulnerable officer at his mercy ever since their first accidental encounter which taught Yusef to hope that he might take advantage of the man of authority some way. Scobie was not altogether unaware of the menace for ' To give help to a Syrian was only a degree less dangerous than to receive help' (P. 29). While struggling with fever, Scobie was visited by Yusef whom he consents to see:'When he awoke, Yusef was beside him' (P. 90). Yusef came to discuss business and inform Scobie that Wilson was especially sent to report on the Diamond smuggling in which Yusef was involved. A week or so later, Scobie ' opened the door and found Yusef on the step' (P.106). After lending Scobie the money he sent Louise with on a vacation, Yusef began to think that Scobie owed him at least his home hospitality. Despite the danger he exposes Scobie to, Yusef pays visits to the other though sporadically. The extradegietic narrator seizes the opportunity to inform on a dynamic, retrospective, non-routine action that entrappinged Tallit:

> But by that time the door was open and he saw Yusef stretched in a chair, asleep, breathing so gently that the hair lay motionless on his chest…. Yusef had never been here since the night *he came to enquire after Louise and to lay his trap for Tallit.* (P. 215)

Yusef's actions are also marked by commission. He acts in accordance with his personality that is so apt to deceive and exploit. Yusef, nevertheless, is never pried open for the reader to judge whether there are any acts of omission. As for contemplated acts, the Yusef-Scobie liaison was originally a figment of the former's imagination and a conspicuous plan brewing long and hard in his mind waiting only for the feasible conditions to grow out into a

substantial reality. The lack of direct characterization of Yusef's actions portrays him as the invisible man behind the puppet show.

Though it comes second in Rimmon-Kenan's model, speech predominates in ***The Heart of the Matter*** performing characterizing functions more than action. In fact Ali and in particular Yusef are mainly conveyed to the readers through what and how they speak though this does not necessarily apply to their European counterparts. Ali, for instance, speaks English creole perhaps Pidgin or, at best, black English in spite of his being in the company of Scobie for 15 years.

-"Missus want drinks." (P. 38)
-"Massa take plenty aspirin.' (P. 84)
-"I tell him go away," Ali said with contempt, "but he stay." (P. 215)
- Ali said, "This stinking Mende boy he go all round the house. He try doors." (P.263)

Ali's language with the most prepositions and third person (s) dropped and impoverished lexicon encodes the cultural distance between the native Africans and Europeans and redounds to the orientalist myth of the intellectual inferiority of the other. Ramsey-Kurtz (2003: 317) explains Ali's broken English in that he 'has never appropriated the foreign culture but retained aloofness from it' and it registers 'his indifference to Westerner's intellectual pursuits.' Scobie himself occasionally mimics Ali's language when he orders him around or he is disposed to:

-"Lay two places. Missus better." (p. 20)
-"Plenty lorries." Scobie obeyed… (p. 83)

Ali's answers seem to be constantly brief, polite, curt, and telegramic even when he was literally cross-examined by Scobie whom he served for years. As Ali came suddenly upon him with his mistress and thus uncovered his secret love affair, Scobie felt entitled to humiliate and offend Ali by mistrusting his motives. Scobie was irritated by the fact that Ali could effortlessly locate his whereabouts and that he was so exposed before his boy:

-"What are you doing here, Ali?"
"Missus sent me," Ali said. "I wait here for Massa tell him Missus back." He was hardly visible in the shadow.
"Why were you waiting here?"

"My head humbug me," Ali said. "I go for sleep, small small sleep."
"Don't frighten him," Helen said. "He's telling the truth."
"Go along home, Ali," Scobie told him, "and tell Missus I come straight down." He watched him pad out into the hard sunlight between the Nissen huts. He never looked back. (P. 260)

Ali is not engaged in any sophisticated discussion with Scobie. His utterances are brief and condensed as they are mostly servile replies to commands or answers to questions. Ali is illiterate and seems to be perfectly reconciled to his illiteracy 'as part of his rootedness in African oral culture' (Ramsey-Kurtz, 2003: 317). His English is merely communicative and he lacks in profundity and intellectual vigour that marks Yusef. His shallow verbal exchanges with Scobie reinforce the notion of dominance and hegemony where the Black race is intrinsically dominated by the White. Ali, however, features in Scobie's as well as other characters' speeches and thoughts. While Ali is denied sophisticated self-expression which could provide evidence of his own integrity, others take the floor in his stead whether in defense or condemnation:

-"You'll be happier with Ali, dear. It will be like the old days before I came out." (P.79)
- He read, My darling, this is serious. I [Helen] can't say this to you, so I'm putting it on paper. Only I'll give it to Ali. You trust Ali. (p. 216)
- He thought again: Can Ali really be trusted? and all the stale Coast wisdom of the traders and the remittance-men told him, "Never trust a black. They'll let you down in the end. Had my boy fifteen years . . ." (P. 264)
- "I think I trust him. But he knows about you [Yusef] too. He came in last night and saw the diamond there. Your boy was very indiscreet.' (p. 270)

Unlike Ali, Yusef's English carries no sign of inferiority. His fluent language verges at times on philosophy though he does not know his alphabetic either. At their very first encounter, Yusef seizes the opportunity to build ties with Scobie, cajoling and paying him lip service hammering on their alleged friendship: "Ah, Major Scobie," Yusef said, "a friend in need is a friend indeed" (P. 29). Muslim as he is, Yusef plays on Scobie's Catholic faith which was one of the elements that precipitated his final down fall. His illiteracy sharpens

his other faculties, namely, shrewd observation and memory (p. 30). The Samaritan is not the only biblical reference which Yusef puts to his advantage. Later, he goes as far as calling Scobie a second Daniel:
-"The cars have gone by, and I have thought: When will a Good Samaritan appear?" (p. 29)
- I said to myself, Yusef, a Daniel has come to the Colonial Police." (p. 92)

In their next encounters, Yusef does not waste time employing to his full advantage the strategic coaxing language and his absurd friendship argument. He also exposes diverse facets of his eccentric personality when he talks, for instance, about his passion for Shakespeare and poetry establishing intertextual cues that pour in his favour:
-"Sit up a moment, Major, and let me beat your pillows."
-"I am not offering you a bribe, Major Scobie. A loan at any time on a reasonable rate of interest four per cent per annum. No conditions. You can arrest me next day if you have facts. I want to be your friend, Major Scobie. You need not be my friend. There is a Syrian poet who wrote, 'Of two hearts one is always warm and one is always cold: the cold heart is more precious than diamonds: the warm heart has no value and is thrown away." (P. 94)
-"Yes, I do like you, Major Scobie." Yusef sat on the edge of his chair. (P. 107)
-"I am the base Indian."
"The base Indian?"
"Who threw away a pearl," Yusef sadly said. "That was in the play by Shakespeare the Ordnance Corps gave in the Memorial Hall. I have always remembered it" (P. 218)
-"My friendship with you is the only good thing in this black heart. I cannot give it up. We must stay friends always.' (P. 162)
-"Major Scobie, if I saw more of you, I should become a better man." The soda hissed in the glasses and Yusef drank greedily. (P.269)
-Yusef said, "I have always dreamed of an evening just like this with two glasses by our side and darkness and time to talk about important things, Major Scobie. God. The family. Poetry. I have great appreciation of Shakespeare. The Royal Ordnance Corps have very fine actors and they have made me appreciate the gems of English literature. (P.273)

However, these moments of serenity and sublimity are occasionally followed by others where masks are removed and Yusef blackmails and extorts. Then, he exercises pressure directly or indirectly threatening or dropping hints as to his alleged power over Scobie. With Yusef and Scobie, the hegemony equation is thrown out off balance; the English man writhes under the power of the other, the Syrian Yusef:

- He said, "Perhaps if you were writing one day to Mrs. Scobie you would give her my best wishes. Oh, no, letters are censored. (P. 110)
-"I will tell him you took my money and together we planned the arrest of Tallit. But you did not fulfil your bargain, so I have come to him in revenge. In revenge," Yusef repeated gloomily, his Roman head sunk on his fat chest. (P. 162)

More about Yusef is voiced by characters in the narrative other than Scobie for instance by Father Rank, Tallit, Wilson and the Commissioner respectively:
- Yusef humbugged you, eh, Tallit, you young rogue? Not so smart, eh? You, a Catholic, humbugged by a Mahometan. I could have wrung your neck." (P. 70)
- "He's a dirty dog," Father Rank said, with a kind of relish. (P. 70)
- Tallit said, "Yusef is a very bad man." (P. 70)
- They say he passes false diamonds, smuggles real ones, sells bad liquor, hoards cottons against a French invasion, seduces the nursing sisters from the military hospital." (P. 70)
- "He [Yusef]'s a man to beware of, Scobie**."** (P. 154)

In contrast, Scobie's verbal references to Yusef are often mitigated as they are either trivial, ironic, or even funny: "What a queer chap you are, Yusef. I believe you do like me. (P. 107). Nevertheless, as the events entangle and pressures increase crushing him along, Scobie can see clearly through Yusef's blackmail scheme: "One needs a long spoon to sup with you, Yusef" (P. 91) in reference to the European proverb 'That who sups with the devil needs a long spoon.' He confronts Yusef, but it is too late:
- Scobie said slowly, "Sooner or later, Yusef, I felt sure that you'd want something out of me. But you are going to get nothing but four per cent. Tomorrow I am giving a full confidential report of our business arrangement to the Commissioner**.** (P. 108)

-"Yes, but you see Yusef's man is not the same as Yusef. It's easy for him to disown a country storekeeper. In fact, for all we know Yusef may be innocent. (p. 138)-"I'm not a fool, Yusef. I know it would be of great use to you if people believed we were friends. I'm not giving you that help.' (P. 162)

External appearances encode a lot about a character's personal qualities. In ***The Heart of the Matter***, Ali is physically described as ' short and squat with the broad ugly pleasant face of a Temne. His bare feet flapped like empty gloves across the floor' (p. 16). Other than being a short, squat and a black African, the last piece of information implied rather than directly delineated, nothing thematic about Ali's external appearance is mentioned. He is apparently an average African who has nothing to distinguish him of the rest of the natives. However, towards the end of the narrative when Scobie's doubts took hold of him, he started to read more in and attribute malice to Ali's countenance: 'He could see Ali's face in the driving mirror, set, obstinate, closed and rocky like a cave mouth '(P. 255). Ironically, Ali's alleged obstinacy is only reflected in the mirror, which obliquely hints at a situation where it is not Scobie's image of Ali that dominates but Yusef's.

On the other hand, physical descriptions abound in relation to Yusef. Yusef's appearance is constantly referred to and even assessed unfavourably and depreciatingly. On his first meeting Yusef, Scobie's view is focalized:

- The light from Scobie's car lit up the large pasty face, the lick of his white hair falling over the forehead, just touched the beginning of the huge thighs in their tight white drill. Yusef's shirt was open at the neck and tendrils of black breast-hair coiled around the buttons. (P. 29)
- Yusef opened his eyes: the gold teeth fitted by his brother, the dentist, flashed instantaneously like a torch. (P. 29)
- Yusef settled himself into the Morris, easing a large thigh against the brakes. (P. 31)
- Yusef eased his great haunches onto the hard chair and noticing that his flies were open put down a large and hairy hand to deal with them. (P. 90)
- The reek of hair oil came closer as he bent towards the bed: the deep brown eyes were damp with what seemed to be emotion. (P. 94)

- Yusef sat on the edge of his chair, which cut a sharp edge in his great expanding thighs: he was ill at ease in any house but his own. (P. 107)
- Yusef hovered like a fat moth on the edge of the light. (P. 110)
- The moment of inferiority had passed: the great head had shaken itself free of the bromide even though the limbs still lay sluggishly spread over the sofa. (P. 160)
- Yusef mopped the soda-water off his face with the back of his hand. (P. 160)

Yusef's physical features are filtered through Scobie's alert, detesting consciousness. Since Yusef represents an awkward obstacle and a heavy, cumbersome burden on Scobie's conscience, Yusef's animal-like fatness, sluggishness, heaviness, even clumsiness as well as hideousness are emphasized. More than once in the narrative, Yusef is pictured either asleep, half asleep, supine or even intoxicated. His presence is associated with heavy breathing, grunting (P. 159), hissing and reeking odours, a matter that redounds to his spiritual corruption and predatory animalism, but also recalls physical sloth and laziness stereotyped about Arabs. The articles of his dress and general style are obliquely hinted at in a manner that affirms his distaste, vulgarity and even discomfort. His external appearance is marked by inferiority typical of his race which lacks in fashionable graces and refinements. Besides, he is the villain in action and must look the villain in visage. His invincibility and immunity are reflected in Scobie's describing him as a 'Roman head' (P: 159 and 162). Yusef is an impenetrable Roman head and it is no use tilling against it. The Roman-Head metaphor recalls Yusef's distant Phoenician roots though.

Ali and Yusef are also characterized in terms of the environment though it does not necessarily provide a commentary on personal qualities. The environment foreshadows events and actions the characters are involved in. For instance, when Scobie fully trusted Ali and felt safe with him, Ali's actions are reported against a friendly, serene domestic background:

- He was walking through a wide cool meadow with Ali at his heels: there was nobody else anywhere in his dream, and Ali never spoke. Birds went by far overhead, and once when he sat down the grass was parted by a small green snake which passed onto his hand and up his

arm without fear and before it slid down into the grass again touched his cheek with a cold friendly remote tongue. (P. 82)
- He stated gently, firmly, pointing to the camp bed he had made up at the edge of the path with the mosquito net tied from the branches overhead. (P 82-3)

In contrast, when Scobie's doubts settled on incriminating his servant, Ali's presence was pictured against a rather devious and misty background:

- He was *hardly visible in the shadow*. (P. 261)
- He watched him pad out into *the hard sunlight between the Nissen huts*. (P. 261)

There are occasions when Scobie tried hard to remind himself of Ali's innocence, loyalty but usually they fade fast as the other possibility wins the argument: 'He remembered Ali the night after Pemberton's death, cup of tea in hand, holding him up against the shaking lorry, and then he remembered Wilson's boy slinking off along the wall by the police station' (P. 261). Ali's death environment carries an acrid, ironic commentary on the cruelty and indifference as well as absurdity of the entire affair:
- The body lay coiled and unimportant like a broken watch spring under a pile of empty petrol drums: it looked as though it had been shovelled there to wait for morning and the scavenger birds. (P. 276)

As for Yusef, he is portrayed against different backgrounds that deepen the halo of insidiousness and criminality around him:
- He passed from one to another, pulling the curtains aside, till he reached the little room where nearly two months ago now he had lost his integrity. On the sofa Yusef lay asleep. (P. 158)
- There were no bookshelves, for Yusef couldn't read: no desk, because he couldn't write. It would have been useless to search for papers – papers were useless to Yusef. Everything was inside that large Roman head. (P. 159)

In the last example, Scobie contemplates with dismay and despair Yusef's environment for the man leaves no traces by which he could be followed and no written document to incriminate him. Yusef's environment is designed, organized and tempered with to his

own benefits and service. But it also emphasizes his illiteracy and unschooled existence. It, further, shows hostility and shuts itself tight against any invasion or intrusion. It is more like a medieval Sultan's mansion with curtains to disguise the master's private chamber, a labyrinth- like where people lose their way along with their integrity. Scobie fell under his spell and became both his accomplice and victim.

In relation to analogy, both *Ali* and *Yusef* are common Muslim names though Ali is relatively more Islam-relevant than Yusef, a Semitic rendition of biblical Joseph or perhaps the other way round. The narrator emphasizes thus the Islamic background especially of Ali who is not an Arab and could have had, in stead, a name with some African connotation. Their names asserts their alienation and even unfriendliness towards the Europeans. Ali's fate, if one stretches the metaphor further with caution, recalls the fate of his Muslim namesake. Whether Greene was aware of the connotation in Ali's name or not is a question for further research.

Relevant to environment discussed above is analogous landscape which is designed to comment on Yusef's personal qualities, namely, mystery, deceit and dubiousness. For instance at the night Yusef gave orders to murder Ali, the background landscape spells out a commentary on the absurdity and immorality of the action: ' Through the window behind Yusef's head, from somewhere among the jumble of huts and warehouses, a cry came: pain and fear: it swam up like a drowning animal for air, and fell again into the darkness of the room' (P. 275-6). Elsewhere, analogous landscapes betray a lot about Yusef's demonic nature. Yusef is, thus, portrayed against a dark murky background that projects on the covert illegal affairs he is involved in. There is always an aura of mystery let alone conspiracy enfolding Yusef's presence as well as his gestures and motions. His verbal smoothness, alleged truthfulness, and straightforwardness are only an external veneer which peels off once his disgraceful actions are uncovered. The murky, misty atmosphere gives Yusef away to the alert readers and sends warning signals that Yusef is constantly up to no good:

- As he climbed the steps to Yusef's office he could see, looking back, an obscure thickening of the darkness where Wilson stood and watched and hated. (P. 268)
- Yusefs voice said, "Let us leave the room dark."' (P. 273)
- That was the last Scobie ever saw of Yusef, a silhouette stuck stiffly and crookedly on the wall. (P. 276)

As to the analogy to other characters, Yusef is set in comparison to Tallit, another Syrian whose actions are by no means less illegitimate for ' every police officer who wasn't in Yusef's pay would be bribed by Tallit here" (P. 70). The comparison exposes the criminality of both though obviously Yusef is the more intelligent and/or thriving of the two. Unlike Yusef, Tallit managed to worm himself into the European circles due to his Christian faith and the lip-service he pays to Father Rank who happens to like a good banquet:

-Yusef's got a big house across the street and Tallit wants it, don't you, Tallit? What about dinner, Tallit? We're hungry." (P. 72)

-"You always get a good meal in Tallit's house," Father Rank said. (P. 72)

Ali is portrayed in analogy to his fellow Africans where the comparison is resolved almost always in favour of Ali's once superior qualities:

- In the intervals of leave many people tried to steal Ali's services, but he had never yet failed to be waiting except once when he had been in prison. (P. 17)
- The door burst open and there was Ali. He had a boy by the arm who whimpered. Ali said, "This stinking Mende boy he go all round the house. He try doors." (P. 263)

However, as Scobie commences to suspect Ali, the analogies intensify throwing Ali in the same lot with other Africans or even non-Africans conspiring to bring Scobie down:

- Ali stood by his car, talking to another boy who slipped quietly away when he saw Scobie approach. "Who was that, Ali?"

"My small brother, sah," Ali said. (P. 255)

- The spies, he thought, are creeping in. Is this Wilson, Harris, Pemberton's boy, Ali . . . ? "Massa," a voice whispered, and a bare foot slapped the concrete floor. (P. 262)

- Ali pushed the boy ahead of him through the door, and Scobie could hear the rustle of their feet on the path. Were they whispering together? (P. 263)

Race and Religion in The Heart of Matter

In the study of ideology, the concept of the other is crucial and vital. Since ***The Heart of Matter*** invests religious and racial differences, the contrast between we-they functions constantly as the two races and religions are set in analogy to each other. There is on the one hand Europeans or rather The English and Arabs or more specifically Syrians on the other. Likewise, Christianity operates on one side and Islam on the other. This African Colony is marked by its diversity which is described rather resentfully very early in the narrative:

> "This is the original Tower of Babel," Harris said. "West Indians, Africans, real Indians, Syrians, Englishmen, Scotsmen in the Office of Works. Irish priests, French priests, Alsatian priests." (P. 6)

Racial and religious references abound in the narrative whether they are mentioned positively, negatively or even neutrally. The word Syrian(s) appears (28) times in the text in a variety of context whether derogatorily, objectively or pathetically. The English government stresses how important it is for the English to dominate the colony single-handed and unrivalled. A Syrian, therefore, is a threat that should be dealt with intelligently and relentlessly or so Wilson, the government agent, meditates: 'Intelligence realized that a Syrian might one day go home to his own land, but the English stayed' (P. 184). As such, if a Syrian is ever praised, it is not for being Syrian but for being a good Christian as in the case of Tallit. They are 'the poor Syrians who suffer to quote Yusef (P. 31). To a Syrian like Yusef, they are illiterate ignorant and weak. But, to the Europeans, they are Syrians who bribed every police officer they get hold of (P. 70), or the Syrians for whom a European does not have to dress up as Harris instructed Wilson (p. 64). Syrians commit crimes but they get away with them because nothing is ever proved against a Syrian (P. 70) or it is a Syrian poet who wrote a bad poem Yusef quotes though Scobie is no judge of poetry (P, 94). Scobie does not refrain later from bringing up the poem incident mockingly. It is that Syrian story about a lion

and a mouse which has a European equivalent and which Scobie did not care to hear it through (P. 269). Syrians are smuggling diamonds and running other illegal trades (p. 108). They are the Syrians that none can beat (P. 117). Syrians are watched and reported on (P. 202). Thus whenever a Syrian is mentioned, the reference is coupled with some evil whether in accusation or defense. However despite all the warnings, Yusef managed to worm blackmail his way through to Scobie's world. Ramsey Kurtz (2003: 317) points to the irony involved in Scobie aligning to Yusef despite racial and cultural barriers in that the 'alienated, Scobie turns towards the Syrian tradesman Yusef who insistently claims to suffer the same isolation as Scobie.' Further, Yusef has scored his evil successes through overreaching the Other and learning ' the colonist's art of deception.'

Islam is obliquely hinted at through the mention of Muslims. Ali's religion does not seem to interfere with the kind of life he leads with the Scobies whose Catholic faith is often mentioned in the text. It does not appear as faith for some of the so-called Muslims barely abide by Islamic laws. Yusef for instance violates Islamic laws and suggests to bend them and reinterpret Quranic instructions:

-"A little beer then, Major Scobie."
"The Prophet doesn't forbid it?"
"The Prophet had no experience of bottled beer or whisky, Major Scobie. We have to interpret his words in a modern light." (P. 106)

Muslims are looked at unfavorably by the Roman Catholic Church because of the tight grip Syrian Muslims namely Yusef have on the colony:

- The Colonial Secretary said to Colonel Wright, "You see the kind of difficulty we are up against. The Roman Catholic Syrians are claiming they are a persecuted minority and that the police are in the pay of the Moslem Syrians." Scobie said, "The same thing would have happened the other way round only it would have been worse. Parliament has more affection for Moslems than Catholics." (P. 151)

The parliament affection stems from its belief that the Roman Catholic Church is more threatening to the Anglican government.

Thus, Father Rank, the ardent representative of the Roman Catholic church abuses Yusef and denounces him as the incorrigible rogue he is, not because Tallit is a better specimen than Yusef, but because he does not want a Muslim to grow rich and strong, at least, not where Father Rank lives: 'Yusef humbugged you, eh, Tallit, you young rogue? Not so smart, eh? You, a Catholic, humbugged by a Mahometan. I could have wrung your neck" (p. 70).

Final Reflections

Syrians and Muslims are characterized in ***The Heart of the Matter*** to comment on the peculiarity the African world imposes on all those who come in contact with it. All characters are flawed one way or another whether European, Syrian or African. Each is caught in his/her own weaknesses. The atmosphere around is so corrupt that none could escape contamination.

Characterization limits itself regrettably to what Scobie sees, thinks, says or hears others express. Greene escapes impeachment by maneuvering narration where the extradiegetic narrator is rarely given the floor. The best that narrator could do is pry Scobie's or Wilson's minds open and invite the readers to see for themselves. In so doing he gave free leash to his characters to prosecute, abuse, and denounce the Syrian Muslims though they are no less guilty than the others. However, he escapes censure and blame because this is the way Muslim Syrians are depicted in the colony and Arabs almost everywhere else!

To Greene's European characters, Africans are ignorant, intrinsically treacherous, incurably criminal. Syrians are blackmailers, bribers, smugglers, a danger and national threat to be eliminated and in short nuisance to be rid of. The depiction conforms to the traditional and classical portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in Oriental writings. The only exception is that Greene's Arabs and Muslims are far more diabolical and powerful than the custom dictates. In the character of Ali whose name the novel does not attempt either to clear or denounce, another facet is explored. His remains a misty, murky affair like everything else around. His is a for-ever-accused race of dishonesty, treachery and inferiority. his crucifix -like death

conducted in English-Syrian partenership would not atone for or expiate his race intrinsic culpability.

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الاستشراق و الشخصيات العربية او المسلمة في رواية غراهام غرين قلب الامر: دراسة اسلوبية سردية وفق انموذج ريمون–كنان

الخلاصة:

لطالما ظهرت الشخصيات العربية او المسلمة او كلاهما معا" في الكتابات الغربية سواءا" كانت واقعية او قصصية قبل و بعد الاستشراق. بشكل عام، تميز وصف الشخصيات في الرواية بشكل خاص بالاستهانة و الاستخفاف و السخرية و التحقير. تملي هذا التعامل السلبي مع الشخصيات العربية و الاسلامية اسباب ايدولوجية و عرقيةز تحاول هذه الدراسة اتطلاع عوالم الشخصيات العربية او الاسلامية في رواية غراهام غرين قلب الامر مستعينة بأنموذج للتشخيص و ضعه ريمون–كنان لغرض تحليل و تأويل الاشارات التي يزخر بها النص و التي توضح القالب الفكري الجامد الذي وضق الانسان العربي او المسلم بين جرانه من خلال متابعة اساليب التخيص التي اتبعها المؤلف في خلق يوسف و علي و هما الشخصيتان قيد البحث.